

GRILL FLAME (U) SECRET
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17 January 1980

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Gale Briefing to ZA, Science Evaluation Group Final Report on GRILL FLAME, 14 Jan 80 (U)

1. (S/NOFORN) During subject briefing Mr Gale gave the impression of a final report that can stand impartial scrutiny by qualified scientists. He has, in briefing the report here and elsewhere, done a great deal of verbalizing (shading) issues, personal opinion, "faction," and general guesswork not contained anywhere in the report. Some of it is just plain misleading. For example, "Dean Jahn at Princeton has a two-year leash on his PK program and had to invoke freedom of inquiry, the academic Magna Carta, before the University President allowed him to go ahead." In fact, Dean Jahn does not have a drop dead time two years out. He explained, and twice reconfirmed that the two year marker is when he expects to have some credible results to report.

2. (S/NOFORN) Some other points I jotted down that may be of interest to you:

a. "I rejected two people who had pronounced tendencies to be nonobjective." FACT: One person himself declined the offer to participate, claiming potential flak from his corporation. The other, Dr Ray Hyman, was rejected not because of any action by Gale, but because of a protest memo from MG Thompson to Dr LaBerge.

b. When MG Thompson asked if there were any non-Warsaw Pact countries besides the United States, which are interested in this type research, Gale responded that there are a "few," with the UK somewhat involved/leading. In fact, the US is far behind many countries in this regard, and accounts for only a fraction of the work going on. See attachment.

c. When quizzed by MG Thompson on what the word "proof" in the report findings meant, Gale responded with a flurry of scientific buzzwords and jargon, the bottom line of which is that SCIENTIFIC PROOF has not been demonstrated -- which is vastly different that what the report says and implies. The report states that no proof, scientific, empirical, or otherwise has been demonstrated. Under the report's definition of proof the very real phenomenon of Ball Lightning does not exist -- not because it has not been observed by tens of thousands of people throughout history -- because it cannot be duplicated in a laboratory. (Note: This all inclusive, misuse of the word proof is a major, extremely serious flaw in the final report.)

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d. "There have been over 5000 experiments, many of which are undocumented. There is a low hit rate and low probability of success." FACTS: First, the number 5000 is an unadulterated W.A.G. (wild guess) -- no-one can say, probably within a couple of tens of thousands, how many PSI tests have been run in even recent history. Second, it is disturbing and not at all trivial that all work is lumped together in this report's final analysis. INSCOM's 300-odd runs and SRI's 1972 work are commingled, disregarding the fact that INSCOM's operational tests have been producing some amazing things, with better frequency than in the past.

e. "No effort to date has the potential to establish the existence of the phenomena." FACT: Again, perhaps not in the scientific sense of proof (yet), but certainly in the meaning of field observation (empirically).

f. "MICOM's random number generator experiment does not take into account system artifacts and other outside influences not related to PK at all." FACT: I believe MICOM has taken into account all known system artifacts and methodically checks to insure the system itself is not generating noise. There may be several experts on random number generator manufacture in the US, but none of them were on the Evaluation Group.

g. "Some scientifically proven effects, not PK, are evolving which explain previously 'mysterious' phenomena." Mr Gale used as his prime example a November 1979 Science article, which postulates as to why computer "soft fails" occur. (So-called soft fails are when for a still unexplained reason a byt is dropped out during a run, but later turns back up. To the average scientist any explanation is better than black magic or PK.) The article attributes soft fails to random cosmic rays. This explains why a byt disappears, perhaps, but why it comes back later is left hanging by the cosmic ray theory. Where did the byt go?

h. "The Surgeon General is critical of the MICOM proposal. FACT: I do not think the Surgeon General's ad hoc Human Use Committee in its deliberations on the MICOM protocol, was especially critical of MICOM's proposal. (Note: Gale's remarks were based on a cribbed copy of the Surgeon General's comments. Question I have is who gave it to him.) As I recollect, the MICOM work was approved provided the volunteer consent statement was revised. It was also suggested that pregnant women not participate in the tests. The facts of the matter are that because of prior intelligence problems (e.g., LSD case) two members of the Surgeon General's review panel are dead set against this kind of work. Unfortunately, one of them, the Panel Chairman, is in a position to drag feet, (two months to get the recommendations out) perform a little sub rosa disinformation on the side, etc.

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i. "The GRILL FLAME Working Group is in a shambles." FACT: As you know I am less than thrilled by the Working Group's leadership, but categorically deny that the Group is in shambles. When you look at it, the Working Group contains a number of doctors, scientists and engineers who are as qualified, more so perhaps given their total command of PSI fact/history/etc, as anyone on the temporary Science Evaluation Group.

j. "The INSCOM [] work does not prove phenomena existence." Again, not scientifically perhaps, but well on the way empirically.

3. (S/NOFORN) Personal thoughts and recommendations:

a. In my opinion the Gale report is big, but weak. Its weaknesses are best determined by others on the DoD Working Group. I feel that Gale recognizes its faulty nature and wants to avoid at all costs being challenged on accuracy, content, etc. By pushing to have the report quickly accepted by Dr LaBerge he will have an effective shield from tough questions and criticism. I doubt he has the answers -- as shown by his failure to adequately respond to the DoD Working Group.

b. The Gale committee was chartered to accomplish a very specific mission: look at the on-going work, evaluate it and make recommendations. As it is turning out I sense that Gale has gone far beyond that charter, impinging on the ACSI's responsibility for total program management. For example, I am certain Gale's charter did not include selling the report around the Pentagon, trying to force implementation of the recommendations even before the report is disseminated or the affected parties have a chance to comment. Nor, do I feel he was given let to brief the Army Secretariat on the problem as he sees it (e.g., Dr Yore, Dr Pierre, etc and the USofA). In other words he should be thanked by the DoD Steering Committee and allowed or told to quietly go his way. The report speaks for itself and he should desist from brokering it around the Pentagon.

c. After Mr Gale briefed the DoD Working Group last week, Dr Vorona sent a memo to LTG Tighe (11 Jan). It urged the Director to intercede with Dr LaBerge on the report. The recommendation was that the report be put on hold until the Working Group, as part of its responsibilities, could provide a clear analysis of what the report says. Do not believe LTG Tighe approached Dr LaBerge, who is now on a TDY until o/a 21 Jan. The memo recommendation should stand unless we are willing to watch Gale work it out to his satisfaction, delivering us a fait accompli.


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